

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-20 CIAE-00 DODE-00 FDRE-00 HEW-08

INR-11 NSAE-00 PA-04 PRS-01 RSC-01 SCA-01 SCSE-00

USIA-15 SWF-02 SR-02 ORM-03 IO-14 ARAE-00 DRC-01 /104 W

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P 261956Z AUG 74

FM AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6812

INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA PRIORITY

UNCLAS PORT OF SPAIN 2066

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAID, SWEL, TD

SUBJ: USG DISASTER ASSISTANCE FOR RELIEF OF VICTIMS OF
TROPICAL STORM ALMA IN TRINIDAD

BOGOTA FOR AMBASSADOR LLOYD I. MILLER

1. ON AUGUST 14, TROPICAL STORM ALMA SWEPT ACROSS CENTRAL TRINIDAD WITH WINDS OF 55 MPH. ALTHOUGH HURRICANE FLORA HIT TOBAGO IN 1966, ALMA WAS FIRST MAJOR TROPICAL STORM TO HIT TRINIDAD IN THIS CENTURY. FROM VANTAGE POINT OF CAPITAL CITY OF PORT OF SPAIN IN NORTH OF TRINIDAD, DAMAGE DID NOT APPEAR TO BE TOO SEVERE AND WAS MAINLY LIMITED TO DISRUPTION OF UTILITIES AND FELLING OF TREES.

2. HOWEVER, AS REPORTS HAVE COME IN FROM SOUTHERN AND CENTRAL PORTIONS OF COUNTRY, IT HAS BECOME APPARENT THAT SCOPE OF DISASTER IN THOSE AREAS IS SIGNIFICANT. ALTHOUGH ONLY TWO LIVES LOST, THERE HAS BEEN MAJOR DAMAGE TO AGRICULTURE AND HUNDREDS OF HOUSEHOLDS HAVE BEEN RAVISHED AND OCCUPANTS HAVE LOST ALL THEIR BELONGINGS. RED CROSS AND GOTT'S NATIONAL EMERGENCY RELIEF ORGANIZATION (NERO) ARE NOW FEEDING AND CLOTHING SEVERAL THOUSAND PERSONS AS DAMAGE REPORTS CONTINUE TO MOUNT. GOTT CABINET MET IN EXTRAORDINARY SESSION AUGUST 22 AND ALLOCATED INITIAL TT \$100 THOUSAND TO IMMEDIATE RELIEF EFFORTS BUT
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PROMISED MORE WOULD FOLLOW. PRIME MINISTER WILLIAMS SPOKE

TO NATION ON TV AFTER CABINET MEETING TO EMPHASIZE SERIOUSNESS
OF GOVT'S RESPONSE.

3. UNDER CIRCUMSTANCES, AMB MILLER HAS DETERMINED THAT A
DISASTER EXISTS WHICH MAY WARRANT USG ASSISTANCE. AMBASSADOR IS
CONSIDERING POSSIBLE EXERCISE OF HIS DISASTER RELIEF AUTHORITY
TO EXTENT OF US \$5 THOUSAND CASH CONTRIBUTION TO TRINIDAD AND
TOBAGO RED CROSS FOR ASSISTANCE IN IMMEDIATE MEEDS OF FOOD AND
CLOTHING FOR STORM VICTIMS.

4. DO NOT BELIEVE AT THIS TIME THAT ANY FURTHER USG ASSISTANCE
WILL BE REQUIRED. BASIC CAPABILITY OF LOCAL RELIEF ORGANIZATIONS
IS VERY GOOD AND LOGISTIC FACILITIES APPEAR ADEQUATE FOR HANDLING
OF RELIEF MATERIALS WHICH CAN BE PROCURED WITH CASH CONTRIBUTION.

5. WILL REPORT FURTHER WHEN FINAL DETERMINATION MADE WHETHER
TO EXERCISE DISASTER RELIEF AUTHORITY ALONG LINES PARA 3 ABOVE.
EMBASSY CURRENTLY SEEKING LATEST ASSESSMENT OF SITUATION FROM
GOTT AND VOLAGS.

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